

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action¹, the Examiner took the following actions:

rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 14, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0076865 to Dennison et al. ("Dennison"); and

objected to claims 3, 5-13, and 15 as depending from a rejected base claim, but indicated these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base and any intervening claims.

Claims 16-20 were previously canceled. By this amendment, claims 3 and 5 are canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 2, 4, 6-15, and 21 will remain pending and under current examination.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 14, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dennison. Nevertheless, solely to advance prosecution, Applicants propose the following amendments in order to put this application in condition for allowance. Claim 1 is amended to include the allowable subject matter recited in claim 3. Claim 4 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in claim 5. Claims 6, 8, and 15 are amended in a manner consistent with the amendments to claim 4. Claim 14 is also amended to improve the form of the claim.

The amendments discussed above put this application in condition for allowance and render the rejection and objection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, placing

¹ The Final Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Final Office Action.

claims 1, 2, 4, 6-15, and 21 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 14, and 15 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner. Should the Examiner continue to dispute the patentability of the pending claims, however, the amendments should put the claims in better form for appeal.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: November 2, 2007

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